

Environmental Justice: Partnerships for Communication

The Environmental Justice: Partnerships for Communication Program is a cornerstone of the Translational Research Program supported by the NIEHS (<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/dert/programs/translat/home.htm>).

Environmental justice (EJ) refers to the need to remedy the disproportionate residential and occupational exposures borne by socioeconomically disadvantaged populations.

The main objective of the EJ program is to establish methods for linking members of a community who are directly affected by adverse environmental conditions with researchers and health care providers, and to enable this partnership to develop appropriate research strategies to address environmental health problems of concern. It is essential that research address community-driven EJ environmental health issues in such a way that communities, environmental health scientists, and health care providers all contribute their resident expertise using participatory methodologies.

The NIEHS currently supports 24 unique EJ projects, four of which are the result of recent partnerships established with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. These projects support a broad array of environmental health issues across the nation in ethnically diverse communities. Examples of environmental health issues addressed by the EJ program include:

- groundwater contamination associated with intensive livestock operation in African American communities;
- industrial pollution and asthma and impaired cognitive skills in an urban Appalachian community;
- PCB contamination and fish consumption in Native American and Hmong communities;
- environmental health risks associated with living in public housing in Chicago;
- exposure to radiation associated with uranium mining and milling in Native American populations;
- chemically contaminated food supplies of Alaskan native peoples living on subsistence diets;
- industrial pollution and reproductive health in young Asian American women;
- lupus and other connective tissue disorders in African American women;
- arsenic contamination in drinking water in Latino communities on the U.S.–Mexico border;
- environmental health risks associated with the electronics industry in an Asian American population;
- use of *promotoras* to provide education on environmental health issues in Latino communities on the U.S.–Mexico border;
- mercury contamination in children associated with ritualistic use in Afro-Caribbean and Hispanic populations;
- pediatric asthma in urban African American children; and
- occupationally induced adult onset asthma in a Latino population.

Additional information on specific projects may be found at

<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/dert/programs/translat/envjust/envjust.htm>.

Program contact: **Frederick Tyson**, e-mail: tyson2@niehs.nih.gov